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SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI UPDATES AMBASSADOR ON SOUTH AFRICA
TALKS, TRIP TO THE US

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai told the Ambassador on June 11 that the ZANU-PF position paper submitted to the South African-moderated talks was nothing more than the usual rhetoric, confirming prior suspicion that the GOZ was merely stalling. Unlike the MDC submission that addressed Zimbabwe's future, the ZANU-PF paper rehashed old arguments of colonial oppression and diatribes against the British and supposed "illegal" sanctions, and called on South African President Mbeki to bring the MDC's "British masters" to the negotiating table. Tsvangirai said that the South Africans had yet to respond to the ZANU-PF paper, but added that he was skeptical that Pretoria would be critical or push Robert Mugabe very hard. Tsvangirai referred to the introduction of Constitution Amendment 18 into Parliament (septel) as yet another indication that the GOZ was not serious about the talks as it moved unilaterally to change facts on the ground in advance of elections.

¶2. (C) In a welcome display of creativity, Tsvangirai said he planned to lead a delegation of opposition and civil society leaders to the United States June 25-27. Joining the delegation would be Pro-Senate MDC leader Arthur Mutambara, National Constitutional Assembly Chairman Lovemore Madhuku, Christian Alliance head Levee Kadenge, student activist Lynnett Mudehwe, and Matabeleland-based ZAPU-Federal Party president Paul Siwela. Labor leader Lucia Matibenga hoped also to join the delegation, but did not have a passport. The delegation would also visit the AU, EU, and Canada before and after stopping in Washington and New York. Welcoming the combined visit, the Ambassador promised to facilitate visas for the group) including a travel document for Matibenga) and meetings with Administration officials.

Comment

13. (C) The Zimbabwean opposition has found a clever way around the internal MDC impasse and this broad delegation is the most hopeful sign from them in some time. We recommend the Department facilitate the highest level of access possible for the Save Zimbabwe delegation to reinforce this new found spirit of cooperation.

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